

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A method for producing a hydroxybenzoic acid compound, comprising[[,]] dehydrating a phenol compound selected from the group consisting of o-cresol, p-cresol, m-cresol, 2,6-dimethylphenol, 3,5-dimethylphenol, 2,5-dimethylphenol, o-isopropylphenol, 2,6-di-tert-butylphenol, 2,4-di-tert-butylphenol, 2,5-di-tert-butylphenol, 4-n-octylphenol and 4-tert-octylphenol, and an alkaline metal compound to form the alkaline metal salt of the phenol compound and reacting the alkaline metal salt and carbon dioxide, wherein the dehydrating step is conducted by reacting the alkaline metal compound with an excess amount of the phenol compound, which is in excess of the alkaline metal compound, at a temperature of ~~160°C or above~~180-300°C,

wherein the method is conducted without using an aprotic polar organic solvent.

2. (canceled).

3. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein 2-30 parts by mole of the phenol compound is reacted per 1 part by mole of the alkaline metal compound.

4. (canceled).

5. (canceled).

6. (canceled).

7. (canceled).

8. (canceled).

9. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol compound is 2,6-di-tert-butylphenol or 2,4-di-tert-butylphenol and said hydroxybenzoic acid is 3,5-di-tert-butyl-4-hydroxybenzoic acid or 3,5-di-tert-butyl-2-hydroxybenzoic acid.

10. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the alkaline metal compound is sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide.

11. (canceled).